

## RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN IRAN

In the *south* of Iran there are newspapers which sometimes attack Great Britain and America, and they fear no reprisals. But try to go to the north of Iran with the newspaper *Hur*. You will be promptly arrested! Yes, my dear editor! The editor of *Hur* has not made money, and he has no special mission except to defend 15 million Iranian citizens from the slavery of the dictatorship of the proletariat.<sup>7</sup>

As time progressed Soviet control of political activity in the north lightened. By 1944 and 1945 it was unsafe to profess allegiance to the rightist party of Zia eel-Din or to edit or distribute any nationalist papers. Incurring the displeasure of Soviet consuls or Red Army commanders resulted either in periods in jail or in expulsion from the Soviet zone. A number of such cases were recorded in the Teheran press toward the end of the war period.<sup>5</sup> Among the expelled were Iranian government officials.<sup>9</sup> Fear and uncertainty were characteristic of the people's feelings under the Soviet occupation.

It was generally agreed that the Soviet authorities exerted pressure during the elections to the Majlis in 1943, and that those Communist deputies who were elected owed their success to the presence of the Red Army in the north.<sup>10</sup> As pointed out earlier, the fact that a number of deputies owned land in the Soviet zone rendered them amenable to Soviet persuasion. For example, rumor had it that the attitude and political alignments of former Premier Qavam as-Saltaneh were largely dictated by the fact that his estates were situated in the Caspian provinces.

There is no doubt that from the time of their arrival the Russians persistently prepared the ground in the north with a view to making

\* *Xasim-i-Shomal*, Jan. 25, 1945.

s *Ra'd-i-Emruz*, Dec. 5, 1944, wrote that on the orders of the

Soviet consul in  
Rezaieh three Iranian citizens, Eqtesam Va'ez, Ibrahim Sam-  
Sain, a lawyer, and  
Haji Mirza Ghulam Fegi, were expelled from the Soviet zone.  
See also *Ra'd-i-*  
*Emruz*, Nov. 22, 1944, on the numerous expulsions from Gilan  
and Mazanderan;  
similarly *Tehran-i-Mossavar*, Nov. 17, 1944, on the expulsion of  
Vatan party mem-  
bers from the north.

\**Arzu*, April 28, 1944, contains a photographic reproduction of  
a Soviet order of  
expulsion.

1° To be fair it is proper to say here that the British on their  
part did not neglect  
to influence the elections in the south. Yet, although their  
involvement in the pre-  
electoral intrigue might have been more pronounced than that  
of the Soviet in  
1943, their methods differed widely and could hardly be  
described as intimidation.  
For more detailed analysis of British policies, see Chapter Nine.